School context statement

Grafton High School is a large comprehensive school community, located on the traditional lands of the Bundjalung people on the North Coast of NSW. The school celebrated its centenary in 2012 as one of the first four public high schools established outside of Sydney and has a long standing reputation for academic, cultural and sporting achievement. The school's purpose is to develop and promote a school community (students, staff and parents) working together to achieve excellence. Its aim is to provide quality teaching and learning in a caring environment. As a member of a strong local community of schools, Grafton High School offers an extensive curriculum featuring a large and diverse choice of subjects from Years 7 to 12, a well-resourced and locally supported vocational education program (Years 9 to 12), a support unit catering for students with disabilities and specialised support for learners of all abilities. The School’s selective classes commenced in 2010, with the school being the only semi-selective high school on the north coast of NSW. The selective class seeks to further challenge and support our Gifted and Talented students. Grafton High School provides an inclusive and supportive environment where respectful relationships are valued along with open and honest communication. At Grafton High School, all students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and behaviour as they strive for excellence.

Principal’s message

2014 has been a difficult year, not just for myself but for many staff, and especially the school’s admin staff. This has been largely due to pressures external to the school through the nature of the introduction of the Department of Education’s LMBR software system, which has had significant issues that impacted on quality of service to staff, students and parents. Throughout this very trying time I have been absolutely amazed at the dedication and resilience of our school administrative staff. It has been their professionalism and teamwork alone that has allowed us to pass through this ordeal in far better shape than many other schools.

It is during such difficult and testing times that you reflect on just what it is about a school that keeps it going, that makes me as staff want to keep coming to work each day this year, the things that make myself and many other staff proud to be a part of Grafton High School and our public education system

Without a doubt, the first reason is the students themselves. This year saw the very sad passing of one of our students, Josh Allen. The way our students banded together and supported each other, their positivity and resilience, are a credit to them. They demonstrated a strength of character that flies in the face of the many negative stereotypes of adolescents portrayed in the media. I remember with great pride the Anzac and Remembrance Day ceremonies we held at school. The great reverence that our students hold for these events is demonstrated through their active participation in the ceremonies and the way they conducted themselves as an audience.

Another aspect of our school that inspires me is the high quality education we provide. When I think of quality learning, I can’t go past the “Archibull Prize” and the learning journey our students undertook as part of this project. The Archibull is an art competition where students paint a fibreglass cow to represent an agricultural industry. We were assigned the cotton industry. I was able to attend the presentation of the Archibull by our students at the Ag Farm and it was obvious just how much they had learned from their participation in this contest. It wasn’t just the painting of a cow, the students had also been hosted on a trip out west to experience the cotton industry first hand. You could tell that they had real ownership of the project and their learning, and had thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Again, it would not have been possible without the hard work of our dedicated Science/Ag teacher – Mr Brown. Through the combined efforts of staff and students we were judged as finalists in this competition, an outstanding achievement!
Another reason I come to work each day is to be part of a school that provides a wealth of experiences for students, both within and outside of the classroom. Public education empowers our students to achieve their potential and this has been particularly evident in the many opportunities provided to students at Grafton High School this year.

The final reason I love working at Grafton High School, is the school spirit and the way it binds and motivates our school community. We seem to have a never-ending stream of past students in the school celebrating reunions. The most memorable of these for me has been the Class of 1950, who get together each year for a lunch at school. I was able to join them this year for both lunch and for dinner and I found myself thoroughly enjoying the experience. Here was a group of people who, 64 years on, still felt a deep connection with each other and with the school. This connection is epitomised by the fact that we must be one of the few schools in the state where a past student from 64 years ago, Mr David Williams, with no current direct connections to the school, is an active member of our P&C, serving in the role of treasurer.

I am very proud to be Principal of Grafton High School and am confident that, regardless of what directions the school may take in the future, as always, our focus will remain on the “Quality Teaching, Quality Learning in a Caring Environment”.

Peter South - Principal

P & C and/or School Council message

During 2014 our P&C was quite busy helping raise funds for our school.

Our main fund raiser was through the canteen, which provides excellent food and also has a supply of uniforms for students. I would especially like to thank canteen staff Jenny and Noelene, and our parent volunteers.

Other activities conducted in 2014 included:

- The Grafton Open Art Exhibition “Go Art” ran successfully for the second year and we had more than triple the amount of student art work than last year. Thanks again to everyone who helped with this event and especially our Sponsors. Go Art is scheduled again for the June Long weekend 2015 and Clarence Valley Council has been confirmed as one of our major sponsors again in 2015. Sad news was that our Go Art Patron, Lew Ellem, passed away in 2014, however the Lew Ellem Major Art Prize will continue to be supported by the family & P&C into the future.

- In 2014 we made a major donation of $25,000 to the school for the purchasing of new text books. This was greatly appreciated by the school and ensures our students have the best resources.

A new initiative this year was to create an annual student prize with a combination of our funds and Centenary money raised in 2012. This is the Centenary Student Award.

To finish off I would sincerely like to thank the P&C Executive - Dianne Rose and David Williams, the Committee Members and the Principal Peter South for all their hard work. I would also like to thank all teacher, support staff, parents and students for their contributions to the school over the year.

Richard Green – Grafton High School Parents & Citizens Association President
School Captain’s Message

It has been a pleasure and a privilege to have represented Grafton High School as School Captains throughout 2014. Taking on the job at the beginning of term 4, 2013, we only hoped that we could do as great a job as our previous captains and we feel as though we have done them proud. Being School Captains allowed us to feel as though our decisions really made a difference to Grafton High and that we have ensured the concerns of the student body were addressed. Through making sure that the students of Grafton High School had an input into what was happening around the school, we feel as though over the last 12 months the school has become a more cohesive and cooperative body. As the heads of the Student Representative Council, we were given the opportunity to work closely with Mr Strano, Mrs Worrell and Mr South to discuss ways to improve our school in a way which best promotes our S.H.A.R.E. values. Through promoting Safety, Honesty, Acceptance, Respect and Effort, we feel that Grafton High has improved, and will continue to improve with the help of SRC.

We would like to make special mention of our ever-supportive Vice Captains, Tayla Whalen and Anthony Carr, without you two we wouldn’t have been able to do half as good a job that we did. Yours, along with our Year 12 Prefects’ support and encouragement ensured that the SRC remained the close little family that it is. As we look back on our year as Captains, we turn our focus to the future, and wish the incoming 2015 School Captains, Ryan Lecchi and Jemma Clark, as well as Vice Captains, Noah Reardon and Hara Sutherland, the best of luck. We couldn’t possibly have thought of better people for the job. We know you will represent our school to the best of your ability and have a great time doing it. Thank you and good luck.

Georgia Patterson and Kurt Bloomer

Student information

It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all students be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

Student enrolment profile

Overall, student enrolment in 2014 was slightly increased from 2013.

Student attendance profile
Overall, average student attendance rates were consistent with 2013. Whilst below state average, they are consistent with similar schools and reflect the rural context of the school, with many students living some distance from the school and some living in more isolated outlying communities. These factors impact on student attendance as compared to the majority of the states’ students who attend metropolitan schools.

Grafton High School has systems in place to routinely contact parents when students have unexplained absences. SMS messaging is used to notify all parents of unexplained student absence each day. This has resulted in greater contact back to the school to explain absences as well as the quick identification of any errors in attendance monitoring. Attendance is also included in all academic reports.

Student attendance is managed as a student welfare issue. Year Advisers and the Head Teachers (Student Welfare) follow up with individual students and provide appropriate support. Referrals are also made to the Home School Liaison Officer where necessary. A number of welfare programs are used to assist this process.

**Post-school destinations**

The Year 12 cohort of 2014 was the school’s smallest cohort of recent time at only 81 students. It was also quite unique in that a number of students chose to apply for higher education courses in the Arts, which involved admission outside of the ATAR process and usually through audition or portfolio. This resulted in a lower proportion of students seeking an ATAR pathway in their HSC. Apart from these students, of the 81 students who completed their HSC in 2014, 21% received UAC University offers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post-school destinations</th>
<th>Year 10</th>
<th>Year 11</th>
<th>Year 12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>seeking employment</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>employment</td>
<td>40</td>
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<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAFE entry</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>university entry</td>
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<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Year 12 students undertaking vocational or trade training**

In 2013, 37 students completed a vocational course at Grafton High School and 29 students completed a vocational course through TAFE. This equates to approximately 81% of students completing vocational or trade training.

This is a significant proportional increase from previous years and is indicative of the non-typical makeup of this particular Year 12 cohort, which would account for the lower number of students seeking traditional ATAR University entry/pathways.

**Year 12 students attaining HSC or equivalent Vocational educational qualification**

Of the 84 students enrolled in Year 12 at the start of 2014, 81 (96%) met requirements for the award of the Higher School Certificate.

**Workforce information**

It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all staff must be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

**Workforce composition**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Principal(s)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Teachers</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teacher(s)</td>
<td>63.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning and Support Teacher(s)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Counsellor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administrative &amp; Support Staff</td>
<td>17.972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>99.572</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Australian Education Regulation, 2014 requires schools to report on Aboriginal composition of their workforce.

At Grafton High School, a full time Aboriginal Education Officer provides additional support for our Indigenous students. As a result of participation in an affirmative action program, the school has an Aboriginal person employed as a full time member of the administration team. In addition, a number of Indigenous persons were employed as tutors on a temporary basis as part of the Norta Norta program to support Indigenous students. An additional Aboriginal
person was employed as a para-professional as part of the Federal Government’s “Write it Write” focus schools program to support student literacy.

**Teacher qualifications**

All teaching staff meet the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>% of staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree or Diploma</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Professional learning and teacher accreditation**

**Professional Learning**

In 2014, the school budgeted almost $130,000 towards professional learning. This included approximately $10,000 towards professional learning activities for Administrative and Support Staff to assist in the implementation of the LMBR program. The remaining $120,000 was allocated to professional learning activities for teaching staff at an average of expenditure of $1,470 per teacher.

Major professional learning strategies were identified and targeted through the school planning process. Approximately $90,000 was allocated towards these targeted strategies, which included:

- The Rich Assessment Across Faculties (RAAF) project, which included inbuilt teacher release for selective class teachers for an action-learning project involving the development of a combined rich assessment task across several subjects.
- The Improving Professional Practice (IPP) program, which was a collaborative learning activity involving 6 teachers from across the school looking into enhanced assessment practices in their classrooms.
- Support for the “Teachers Inc” initiative, which involves teachers meeting outside of school hours on a regular basis to discuss and share professional practice.
- Release for 35 teachers to participate in collaborative programming for the Australian Curriculum in Maths, English, Science and History.
- Support for all executive staff to participate in collegial leadership networks. This included release to attend full and part day meetings with colleagues at other high schools at least once per term.
- Targeted training of staff for delivery of “Rock and Water” and other programs to support student behaviour and personal development.

In addition to these targeted activities, additional funding was reserved for staff to participate in individualised professional learning activities as they became available throughout the year.

All staff also participated in the 5 school development days conducted during the year. Of these, the term 3 day was a special combined high schools development day where all teaching staff from high schools ranging from Macksville to Maclean participated in specialised subject-based professional learning at central venues on the one day. These days were in turn organised by the Head Teacher Collegial Leadership Networks.

Activities undertaken on the remaining school development days included:

- LMBR Student Wellbeing and Student Management training
- Mandatory training including the Child Protection Update, emergency care and anaphylaxis training. Staff were also given an update/refresher on the Code of Conduct.
- Assessment for Learning, Programming and Assessment standards
- Reflection and analysis of HSC results, including the RAP package.
- Training relating to meeting the Disabilities standards and meeting the needs of all students.

**Teacher Accreditation**

In 2014, five teachers were working towards Board of Studies Teaching and Education Standards (BoSTES) accreditation at Proficient, with three of these teachers completing and submitting their accreditation at the end of the year. This included two casual teachers not permanently employed at the school.

In 2014, fifteen teachers were new scheme teachers maintaining accreditation at Proficient. No teachers at the school are currently either seeking or accredited at the voluntary stages of Highly Accomplished or Lead.
**Beginning Teachers**

Two beginning teachers were permanently appointed to the school in 2014, one at the very start of the year and one commencing term 2. Neither of these appointments was known prior to the start of the year or prior to the timetabling process. As such, funding under the “Great Teaching, Inspired Learning” program was used to provide for professional learning experiences as well as casual day release from face to face teaching. Some of the activities undertaken included:

- Release from face to face teaching to observe other teachers in action. This included release of a mentor teacher at another school so that both teachers could observe and work with that teacher.
- Release from face to face teaching for lesson programming
- Release from face to face teaching for report writing. This included release with the Head Teacher – Teaching and Learning to support each teacher in this process and their professional learning related to report writing
- Release time, as needed to work on the Institute of Teachers, teacher accreditation process
- Additional support to attend professional learning activities outside of school and online training.
- Participation in the school “Teachers Inc” professional practice and collaboration program.
- Teacher Induction

**Financial summary**

Grafton High School is one of approximately 229 schools across NSW who are involved in the initial implementation of LMBR and associated financial management processes and software systems. The school receives funding for the calendar year from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2014. This funding includes employee related salary expenses not previously assigned directly to schools. All funds are allocated to schools through the Resource Allocation Model (RAM). The summary chart below shows the breakdown of RAM funds for Grafton High School for 2014.

![Funds received through the Resource Allocation Model (Grafton High School) *](image)

* date source: Schools Finance - Learning and Business

The above table is not an accurate reflection of the schools financial income and expenditure for the year as a significant amount of funding and expenditure was not accounted for until well into 2015. This included the recoup of staffing costs.
that were initially taken from school funds but were later determined to be “non-billable” to schools.

It should be noted that investment income represents interest earned on school and community sources only. Revenue was also less than previous years for school subject and voluntary contributions. This was due largely to significant failures in LMBR software that affected the invoicing of parents and the receipting of payments. In 2014, Grafton High School was also incorrectly placed onto a higher electricity tariff by DEC staff external to the school, without the school’s knowledge or consent, resulting in an overspend in electricity charges that has not been recouped. The school was also additionally charged for mandatory leave costs for some staff, which was not provided for in the RAM allocation to the school, resulting in an overspend in staffing costs.

The school has a Finance Committee, with representation from teaching and non-teaching staff as well as the P&C. The finance committee determines the annual school budget based on the priorities established in the school plan and consideration of faculty and program budget submissions. The school’s financial management processes and governance structures meet financial policy requirements and are audited annually.

A full copy of the school’s 2014 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the School Council and/or the parent body. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

School performance 2014

Grafton High School strives to challenge students to excel across a broad range of curriculum areas as well as through extra-curricular activities.

Academic achievements

NAPLAN

In the National Assessment Program, the results across the Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 literacy and numeracy assessments are reported on a scale from Band 1 to Band 10.

The achievement scale represents increasing levels of skills and understandings demonstrated in these assessments.

Year 7: from Band 4 (lowest) to Band 9 (highest for Year 7)

Year 9: from Band 5 (lowest) to Band 10 (highest for Year 9)

The My School website provides detailed information and data for national literacy and numeracy testing (NAPLAN).

Click on the link [http://www.myschool.edu.au](http://www.myschool.edu.au) and enter the school name in the Find a school and select GO to access the school data.

In 2014, Year 7 students performed, on average, higher than similar school groups in all test aspects, but slightly lower than state averages. However, year 7 data did show a trend to students performing in the lower bands for the 2014 cohort. These trends were replicated in year 9 NAPLAN results.

Higher School Certificate (HSC)

In the Higher School Certificate, the performance of students is reported in performance bands ranging from Performance Band 1 (lowest) to Performance Band 6 (highest).

HSC: Course Summary Graphs

![HSC Course Summary Graphs](chart.png)
As has been mentioned previously, 2014 represented one of the smallest year 12 cohorts for some time and that cohort had a differing pattern of study that involved a greater uptake of vocational subjects through school and TAFE, as well as a corresponding reduction in the proportion of students applying for and gaining University entry.

Average results in Ancient History were again above state average. Many subjects were close to state average, however Mathematics results were significantly less than state average, requiring further analysis. Overall, on average 9% of GHS students received a Band 5/6 in each subject, which is significantly less than the state average. Whilst this is noted as a non-typical cohort, these results will warrant further detailed analysis and response in 2015 as part of school planning and improvement processes.

Other achievements

Public education empowers our students to achieve their potential and this has been particularly evident in the many opportunities provided to students at Grafton High School this year.

Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA)

This year has seen students involved in a range of performances including band, drama and music, variety nights, the Schools Spectacular and public art exhibitions.

The annual Year 12 Performance Night was an opportunity for the students to showcase their major works. The Year 12 Art class also had their major works on display.

The hard work put into both the school band and the school choir by Music staff paid off through a number of successful performances both within the school and the greater community. The launch of the Stellar program was an opportunity for the band to showcase their talents. The school band and choir also took part in both the school ANZAC and Remembrance Day ceremonies. The opening of the Combined Schools Art Exhibition, at the Grafton Regional Art Gallery, was another opportunity for Music students to show their skills. This saw a number of Music students entertaining the crowd with a selection of pieces.
Finally, the Music department put all of these great ventures onto film. This was done as part of the Telstra/Katy Perry competition and how we do Music/Arts at our school. The students all worked hard to showcase the talents and opportunities that are provided here at Grafton High.

Grafton High School entered the Archibull Competition for the first time in 2014. This was a joint venture between Art and Agriculture. The staff and students involved worked tirelessly on the cow and the result was fantastic. The cow has become a feature around the school for the story it tells on Cotton production.

The school again participated in the Combined Schools Art Exhibition that was held at the Grafton Regional Art Gallery. This exhibition is specifically for Year 12 students to show their major works. It was a fantastic opportunity for their parents, family and friends to come and see the artworks that they had put so much time and energy into. We were also fortunate to have students able to demonstrate their talents in significant school-based competitions such as the Sheila Mears prize and our P&C GoArt exhibition.

Our Drama students were involved in Crazy Day celebrations, as well as the picnic in the park, that took place as part of the Jacaranda Festival. These opportunities saw the students extending their classroom learning and putting the skills they had learnt about street theatre into practise. Drama students also took part in the Group Devised Day. This is a day held specifically for Year 12 Drama students. It is an opportunity for them to learn more about Group Devised, which is a mandatory performance as part of their HSC, and to gain valuable feedback for this important component of their studies.

Debating and Public Speaking

We are seeing an ever increasing interest in debating and public speaking at Grafton High School. Again this year, five teams competed in the Premiers Debating Challenge with mixed success. The junior teams had the pleasure of competing against Norfolk Island Central School this year. Unfortunately, we were not able to visit Norfolk Island but were able to compete via video conferencing. This proved very successful and seems to be a great way to organise competition over distance and will be a viable alternative in the future. Our Intermediate and Senior teams competed well but were unsuccessful overall completing some tough matches. At the end of the competition a group of students were able to watch the Intermediate final held in Sydney over video conferencing. This was an exceptional opportunity to see a hard match in progress and to get some tips from the adjudicators. This was an interactive session and was very well received.

We had a large group of students attend the NAIDOC Public speaking competition held at Westlawn Primary School. All students presented interesting speeches and did a wonderful job of representing Grafton High School.

This year we had two students represent the school in the Lions Youth of the Year Public speaking Competition. Ryan Lecchi and Briony Moore were serious competitors in a select group against other Grafton High Schools. Briony Moore was the overall winner and will now move on to the next round of competition in 2015.
We were also able to again participate in the Northern NSW “Philosothon”, where Jemma Clark took out the award for “Best Senior Female Philosopher”.

This year we had a fantastic opportunity presented to us. Twenty students attended a series of public speaking seminars by Dr Kati Jacobs a specialist in drama and public speaking. Lots of interesting information was presented and all present felt they had learned a lot.

Sport

Our students continue to be involved in a range of competitive sports, with a number of significant individual and team achievements, at a local, state and even national level. Of particular note, we had two students awarded North Coast “Blues”: Sarah Kitcher for Netball and Jacob Purser for Hockey. Georgia Allen, Bonnie Moon and Rachael Fahey also received North Coast “Sports Recognition Awards”.

A particular highlight of the year was our under 15’s soccer team, who made it to the top 32 teams in the Bill Turner Cup. The Bill Turner Cup is one of the world’s largest team sport competitions. Over 400 schools compete each year – which means around 6,000 players from NSW, Queensland, ACT and Victoria.

Our team this year was the schools most successful in the competition to date, playing through to be the Area 6A NNSW Division champions after defeating St Pauls Port Macquarie

Some other notable sporting achievements this year included:

- Our CHS boys Hockey team achieved 7th place in the state.
- Our CHS girls Hockey team achieved 8th place in the state.
- Our Under 15’s CHS Netball team were regional finalists
- Our 9/10 Netball team won the Daily examiner Netball competition
- Our Under 14’s Girls Cricket Team were North Coast Champions
- Kyle McIlveen placed third in the High Jump at the NSW All Schools championships, qualifying him for the National Junior Championships to be held in 2015.
- Our rowing teams competed at a number of regional and state events, including the Lismore rowing regatta, where Lauren Pryor and Micaela Scott won 2nd place in the U17 Women’s Double skull. These girls teamed up with Bethany Van Haren and Kristen Scott to take another 2nd place in the U17 Women’s Quad Skull. Bethany Van Haren placed 3rd in the Women’s U15/16 Single Skull and a 2nd with Kristen Scott in the Women’s Double Skull. Adam Pryor won 2nd place in both the Men’s Novice Single Skull Div. 1 and in the Men’s Handicap Skull with Max Van Haren. Max also placed 2nd in the Men’s Novice Single Skull Div. 2. At state CHS titles we also made finals in a number of events.
Significant programs and initiatives – policy

Aboriginal education

Approximately 12% of students enrolled at Grafton High School in 2014 identified as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent. The school qualified for additional funding through the Resource Allocation Model. As such, significant programs related to Aboriginal Education are reported on below in the “Aboriginal Background” section of this report.

Multicultural education and anti-racism

Multicultural education has occurred through a number of specific curriculum focus areas:

LOTE (Languages other than English)

In the mandatory Year 7 LOTE program, students gain a cultural understanding through learning French and Japanese. They also look at Aboriginal Perspectives in Language and discuss the similarities and differences between these languages and English. In Year 8, the students study either French or Japanese for the entire year where they are exposed to various cultural aspects of that country. Year 7 and 8 students had the opportunity to participate in a Japanese drumming workshop where they had hands on experience of using Japanese drums. The students’ cultural understanding is further developed through elective courses in years 9-10. A senior French Beginners class has now commenced where the students are furthering their French cultural and language knowledge.

Cultural Discoveries

This elective Year 9 and 10 subject was studied in 2013 and helps students develop an understanding of the complexity and diversity of cultures as well as an appreciation of the traditional and religious beliefs associated with these cultures.

Lifestyle Studies

This HSC course actively involves students in learning and understanding the important cultural issues that are topical in our society. The students are given the opportunity to contribute their opinions on contemporary issues from a position of knowledge, in order to develop the skills to recognise and challenge cultural stereotyping.

Significant programs and initiatives – equity funding

Aboriginal background

Analysis of NAPLAN results showed that the percentage of Aboriginal students performing below national minimum standards was equivalent to the rest of the state with the exceptions of Grammar and Punctuation and Numeracy. In these two areas the proportion of Grafton High School Aboriginal students achieving below national minimum standards was half that of the rest of the state, an excellent result. In both these areas the proportion of Aboriginal students below national minimum standards was essentially equivalent to that for non-Aboriginal students at Grafton High School.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were involved in a number of challenging and worthwhile programs aimed at enhancing their learning opportunities. Funds provided through the RAM were used to support the following initiatives:

- Wages to maintain the employment of a full time Aboriginal Education Officer
- Norta Norta in-class tuition was delivered to targeted Years 8 and 10 students based on NAPLAN performance. Only 2 students were allocated funding in 2014, but other program funding from school budget was used to ensure further assistance to students who missed out on this funding.
- Norta Norta individual tuition was delivered to 25 senior students by a team of qualified subject-specific tutors.
- Two senior students commenced a special school-based traineeship in Child Services. The students undertook training and at TAFE and also worked one day per week at a local Primary School, working with teachers
- The AIME (Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience) program continued to build links between Yr 9, 10, 11 and 12 students and Southern Cross University. The program aims to give students the skills, opportunities, belief and confidence to finish school and aspire to further education. Funds assisted in staff relief and transport costs for student participants.
Eight students were selected to attend the University of Sydney Summer School and two students were selected to attend the University of Newcastle Summer School. One student was able to attend the Nura Gili Winter School program.

Student participation in cultural events and celebrations including NAIDOC Week celebrations, Sorry Day, Reconciliation Week. School funds were used to assist with costs such as food, venue and equipment hire and transport costs for a range of activities.

Students were also able to participate in a number of other programs including: a Police Surfing School, a Boys Camp at Yarrawarra, the Schools Spectacular and Bangarra dance workshops.

Assistance was provided to Aboriginal students in need through provision of uniform, equipment and food.

A community forum was run through Aboriginal Studies, where students had a chance to interact with and hear from community leaders and elders.

A Senior Indigenous Student Forum using the expertise of Youth Directions focusing on study techniques, time management etc.

Sistaspeak: A girl’s only program run at the school where students learned about resume writing, networking, personal grooming, hygiene, healthy living/lifestyle as well as techniques in listening and observing. Students participated in job interviews and developed skills aimed at getting a job, self-awareness as well as self-promotion.

The Build and Stronger, Smarter, Fitter programs were continued from 2013 into 2014.

Socio-economic background

The Family Occupation and Education Index, or FOEI, is a score that represents the relative socio-economic status of a school community. This score is calculated annually for every NSW public school and is used to determine the extent of any additional funding that school receives for students from a low socio-economic background. Any score over 100 indicates some level of students from a socio-economically disadvantaged background. Grafton High Schools 2014 FOEI score was 129. As such, the school received a significant amount of additional funding in the RAM. This additional funding was used to fund a range of initiatives this year, including:

- $33,997 for the Djehuti Math numeracy program
- $15,000 allocated to student assistance
- $50,000 allocated to the purchase of classroom technology
- $20,000 towards student welfare programs
- $80,000 towards tutorial and mentoring support for seniors, including the staffing of the school learning loft.
- $15,000 to support Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL)
- $10,000 to support an enhanced transition program from year 6 to 7. This included closer liaison between school learning and support staff
- $6,000 to support participation in the STELLAR program, which aims to improve student participation in tertiary education.
- $2,000 to support Attendance strategies such as the Street Data SMS system
- Additional funds used, along with P&C contributions, to purchase new textbooks, novels and resources.
- Plus a range of other individual programs and teacher professional learning to improve classroom practice. One example was the establishment of a specialized year 7 literacy class, with reduced class size and focused resourcing and teaching.

English language proficiency

Only one student at Grafton High School qualified for English Language Proficiency funding in 2014. This funding was used to provide additional one-on-one withdrawal and in-class support for this student, utilising additional resources provided on loan from DEC state.

Learning and Support

In 2014 Grafton High School received significant additional funding through the RAM to support low level adjustment for disability. This funding was broken into four main areas:
• A staff loading equivalent to wages for two Learning and Support Teachers.

• Learning and Support flexible funding. This funding was managed through the school learning and support team. Students referred to the learning and support team by staff or parents were case-managed and provided with appropriate teacher and Student Learning Support Officer (SLSO) support from this funding.

• Integration Funding support for higher need students. This is targeted funding that allowed for the provision of appropriate teacher and SLSO support for identified students.

• Specialist Support Class funding of more than $1,000,000 was provided to maintain the school support unit classes. In 2014 the school had one IO/IS class, one IM class and two Multi-Categorical classes. Funding provides for teacher and support staffing, including the Head Teacher Support position.

Other significant programs and initiatives

Investing in Focus Schools Initiative

Grafton High School participated in the Investing in Focus Schools initiative: Write it Right! Teach Successful Writing. The focus of the program was to empower Aboriginal learners through specific literacy strategies, as well focusing on student engagement. The program allowed Aboriginal students in Years 7 and 8 to be involved in a number of engaging learning activities throughout 2013 and 2014.

Bernadette Basset was employed part time as a Write it Right support officer to develop Personalised Learning Plans for all Years 7 and 8 Aboriginal students. She was also able to work one on one with students to develop literacy strategies to engage and develop their skills. Sufficient funding was able to be carried over from 2013 to allow for the continued funding of this position in 2014.

School planning and evaluation 2012—2014

School evaluation processes

NSW public schools conduct evaluations to support the effective implementation of the school plan. The processes used include:

Evaluation of School Merit System

The school conducted an evaluation of the student merit and rewards system at the very end of 2013. The results of this evaluation were presented and acted on in 2014 and so are reported here. This evaluation involved surveying parents, students and staff in relation to their understanding of and satisfaction with our student merit and recognition system. Surveys were distributed as follows:

• 60 parent surveys (6 were returned completed)
• 84 student surveys
• 21 teacher surveys

Based on the findings of the survey the evaluation team made recommendations for a number of changes, which were all implemented in 2014. In summary, these changes included:

• Strategies to ensure greater awareness of the merit system amongst students, parents and staff. This includes information sheets as well as information sessions for students and staff. The recommendations also included clear criteria for the award of faculty awards

• That there be two formal Year Group merit assemblies, one at the end of term 2 and one early in term 4, with a separate merit assembly conducted for year 12 during the final week of term 3. These formal assemblies are to be prioritised on the school calendar.

• Strategies to ensure the appropriate promotion and acknowledgement of merit recipients including the updating of certificates, promotion of awards recipients in newsletters and presentations on school assemblies. In the case of Gold, Silver and Bronze awards efforts are to be made to further acknowledge students through additional rewards such as a trip to the movies and a BBQ at the end of the year to acknowledge their achievement. This
includes publishing names in the school newsletter. Those who attain the Gold Award are to be presented with a medallion acknowledging their achievement during the Annual Presentation Night.

- That the time each students must spend completing the Gold, Silver and Bronze Merit Scheme be set at 4 weeks per stage. The forms used by students for this process are to be redesigned.

- The review team also recommended several changes to enhance the annual presentation evening.

Evaluation of the Improving Professional Practice (IPP) Initiative

The school invested a significant amount of resource into the IPP program in 2014. As part of the DEC CLASS movie initiative, a professionally produced movie documented the experiences of participants and the benefits gained from the program. Whilst feedback from participants indicated that the program was a success, an evaluation of staff involved was undertaken to determine possible improvements to the program in 2015. Recommendations of this evaluation included:

- Replace the three period fortnightly allowances for participant teachers with a pool of casual relief days to allow staff to better collaborate on either short term or group projects.

- Rather than allocate a budget to each teacher use a combined budget to enable group decisions on expenditure.

- Maintain key aspects of the program such as regular meetings, personal professional learning plans, classroom observations and collaborative planning and practice.

- Increase the number of participants where possible and investigate whether the program can be registered with BOSTES so that it can contribute to registered hours for the purpose of maintenance of accreditation for teachers.

State Audit Office – Performance Audit of the Learning Management and Business Reform (LMBR) Program

In August of 2014 all 229 schools were approached by the Audit Office of NSW to participate in a state-wide audit of the LMBR program. As the LMBR program has impacted significantly on Grafton High School, the school submitted a 75 page response to this audit and volunteered itself for a phone or site audit (but was not selected). The audit findings reflected the significant difficulties being faced by schools and the impact this had on their operation. The full audit findings are available for download from the Audit Office of NSW website:


School planning 2012-2014:

School priority 1

Curriculum and Assessment

Outcomes from 2012–2014

All teaching programs, assessment and reporting practice consistently meet the needs of all students.

Evidence of achievement of outcomes in 2014:

- Continued the full implementation of the reporting review, resulting in reports that address needs identified by staff, students and parents and also meet DEC and BOS standards.

- Sharing of collaboratively-developed rich tasks with all staff via staff meetings demonstrates an improvement in the overall quality of assessment tasks. Staff presentations indicate an increased completion rate among students for tasks that have been specifically redesigned as rich tasks.

- Enhanced processes for administering assessment tasks including assessment schedule booklets for all year groups distributed to all students. These booklets include simple and consistent processes for managing illness and misadventure, late submission of work and re-scheduling of tasks.

- Stage 5 programs submitted as part of TARS and EARS process and reviewed against recommended standards from BOS and DEC.
Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014

- Development of consistent assessment processes and assessment schedules for all students across all years.
- Focus on rich assessment through Improving Professional Practice (IPP) program in Year 7 and Rich Assessment Across Faculties (RAAF) program with select class.
- Focus on Stage 6 teaching programs as part of TARS and EARS process.

School priority 2

Engagement and Attainment

Outcomes from 2012–2014

All students are engaged in a broad and differentiated curriculum that maximises their achievement through the use of quality teaching.

Evidence of achievement of outcomes in 2014:

- 2014 saw a significant increase in the number of students undertaking alternate pathways including TAFE Vocational study.
- Increased number of support unit students accessing mainstream classes. Increased support for teachers in differentiating learning and assessment for life skills students and students with specific learning difficulties.
- Increased use of rubrics and scaffolding to assist a range of students in accessing common assessment tasks.
- Changes to merit system implemented as planned and in accordance with the school evaluation of the merit system.
- Student work samples and demonstrations for the RAAF and IPP programs demonstrated increased student engagement and higher level attainment of outcomes.
- Implemented additional study skills lectures for senior students. These lectures were well attended and received by students.

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014:

- Restructure of learning support team and processes. Team to focus on differentiation of curriculum and adjustments for students with disability in line with state and federal requirements/priorities.
- Implement revised merit and recognition procedures resulting from recommendations of review of merit system.
- IPP and RAAF programs focusing on quality teaching through collegial professional learning and lesson study.
- Implement mentoring and support program for Year 11 Selective Class students.

School priority 3

Literacy and Numeracy

Outcomes from 2012–2014

Individual growth in the development of literacy and numeracy skills is maximised so that all students can achieve their potential.

Evidence of achievement of outcomes in 2014:

- Year 7 literacy class implemented. Significant achievement and improvement in student outcomes through targeted intervention and support in this class to the point where some students were able to “graduate” from the class by the end of the year. Strong teacher support for continuation of this class in future years.
- All Year 7 Aboriginal students and families engaged in Personalised Learning Planning (PLP) process and a plan developed for all students focused on literacy outcomes.
- All Maths staff have taken over implementation of the Dejhuti Maths program, with the continued support of learning and support staff, focusing on the development of fundamental numeracy skills in the classroom.

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014:

- Establish Year 7 literacy class and support for teachers in implementing a targeted reading program across the curriculum as part of the Improving Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership.
- Increase in number of students involved in MultiLit program. Improved targeted student skill development and engagement.
- Promote literacy in all KLA's through monthly focus supported by classroom initiatives and resources.
- Continued teacher professional development.
School priority 4
Aboriginal Education

Outcomes from 2012–2014
Through improved attendance at school, all Aboriginal students are able to engage in meaningful learning experiences to maximise their achievement.

Evidence of achievement of outcomes in 2014:
- Improved task completion rates and improved academic results for Aboriginal students.
- Extended employment of Aboriginal tutor as part of “Investing in our Focus Schools” – “Write it Right” program.
- Analysis of Year 9 NAPLAN results showed that the percentage of Aboriginal students performing below national minimum standards was equivalent to the rest of the state with the exceptions of Grammar and Punctuation and Numeracy, where the proportion of Grafton High School Aboriginal students achieving below national minimum standards was half that of the rest of the state.
- Aboriginal community members and elders engaged in school community forums where they were able to share their culture and experiences with both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014:
- Utilise the “3 Mobs – One River” Aboriginal Learning kit in classrooms to ensure that lessons are culturally rich and relevant.
- Extend employment of Aboriginal tutor as part of “Investing in our Focus Schools” – “Write it Right” program.
- Whole school focus on attendance, with a particular focus on appropriate and relevant ways of recognising and promoting good attendance.

School priority 5
Leadership and Management

Outcomes from 2012–2014
Increase the leadership capacity and density of staff at all levels.

Evidence of achievement of outcomes in 2014:
- Teacher Induction Program presented to approximately 6 casual and permanent beginning teachers throughout terms 1 and 2.
- IPP program incorporates GROWTH coaching and the development of personal plans for all staff, with a focus on collaborative practice. The validity of the model developed is indicated by the fact that it closely mirrors the DEC Professional Development Framework and Plan, to be implemented in 2015. An evaluation of this program indicated that it was highly successful and valued by participants.

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014:
- Implement revised teacher induction program
- IPP and RAAF programs to focus on staff taking the lead in reflecting on and sharing practice.
- Development of a process for the creation of personal professional learning plans, utilising the GROWTH coaching model.

Parent/caregiver, student, and teacher satisfaction
In 2014, the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school. Their responses are presented below.

Evaluation of School Merit System
As part of the evaluation of the school merit system, the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teacher via a school-wide survey. A summary of the main responses follows:
- It was apparent that parents, students and teachers had a general awareness of the merits system, though 50% of parents were unable to provide any detail. Teachers demonstrated the better understanding of the system.
- The majority of parents had students in their care who had received at least one award this year and were able to identify awards such as Community Service and Faculty awards. The majority of teachers, parents and students identified that they valued these merit
awards. Teachers had a number of suggestions for improvement that involved further enhancing and promoting the Faculty Merit Awards and the merit assemblies.

- The majority of parents did not know what types of awards students could receive at the Formal Year Group Merit Assemblies, though 50% indicated they believed these assemblies were worthwhile.

- All parents were aware of the Gold, Silver and Bronze Merit Scheme. However, only 50% understood how teachers recorded positive achievement and behaviour towards these awards and only 50% indicated that they believed these awards were worthwhile. The majority of students were aware of the merit scheme but indicated that had not attempted it, with the main reason being they were not interested in the awards. The most common student suggestion for improvement of the system was to shorten the length of time for each stage of the awards. Teachers were aware of the merit scheme, though many were unable to provide significant detail on the elements of the scheme.

- Fifty percent of parents stated that they had attended an Annual Presentation Night as a parent. These parents were able to identify the types of awards presented on presentation night. 50% of parents stated that they enjoyed watching these ceremonies and they were happy to see their child receiving an award. Most students surveyed had not attended presentation evening and were unaware of the awards given. Of those students who had attended a presentation evening, the majority felt that the evening was either too long or boring.

- There were suggestions from teachers, students and parents around ways the presentation evening could be improved, mainly relating to shortening the length of the overall ceremony, and enhancing the presentation and quality of student performances.

Future Directions
2015-2017 School Plan

NSW DEC is implementing a new school planning process for 2015-17. The new plan will be published on the school’s website from the beginning of Term 2 2015.

In developing this plan a consultation process was undertaken through a school planning committee. The planning committee was comprised of representatives from parents, students, school executive, teachers, support and administrative staff.

An analysis of progress on the 2014 school plan was made against the targets of that plan, focusing on sources of data including, NAPLAN, HSC, student attendance, behaviour and attitudinal data obtained from the “tell them from Me” survey tool. From this analysis, a number of desired products and practices were brainstormed and these were then grouped into common areas to form the strategic directions. From these directions, key purpose, people and processes were identified. These then in turn informed school staffing and budgeting decisions, via the school finance committee. Through this process, a set of themes became apparent and are embedded across the strategic directions. These themes include: digital learning, quality curriculum and assessment, effective administration, values education, student wellbeing, literacy, numeracy and Aboriginal education. Given the shortened timeframes involved and the requirement to plan budget and staffing decisions well in advance of the introduction of this planning process, it is anticipated that this document will undergo further consultation, feedback and refinement throughout the three year planning cycle.
About this report

In preparing this report, the self-evaluation committee has gathered information from evaluations conducted during the year and analysed other information about the school's practices and student learning outcomes. The self-evaluation committee and school planning committee have determined targets for the school's future development.

Peter South – Principal
Gervase Bertus – Deputy Principal
Jo Mellefont – Head Teacher English
Scott Smith – Teacher
Shirley Kelly – SASS
Dick Prior - Parent

School contact information

Grafton High School
97 Mary Street
Grafton NSW 2460
Ph: 02 6642 3355
Fax: 02 6642 3184
Email: grafton-h.school@det.nsw.edu.au
Web: www.grafton-h.schools.nsw.edu.au
School Code: 8117

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